853 may not eat meat if the child is male, or fish if it is female, un-
262 til the child in question is grown and kills either an animal (or bird) or a fish, according to the case, and has given it to the victim of the accident. If the child dies young, the person is accused of having violated the prohibition and is obliged to pay a large indemnity. This extremity is not usually reached, however, for the one to whom the accident has befallen scrupulously keeps away from everything that might cause this sort of murder. Then, if death occurs and he has nothing with which to reproach himself, he can resort to an ordeal or to the verdict of a test based on superstition. In addition in villages that have Batswa, a woman of that
[863] race must nurse the child for an instant after the accident before its mother gives it her breast again. [497]

6) The child is carried on the shoulder, and as soon as it is
854 capable of holding on, on the hip. It does not take many weeks for it to become accustomed to that position. When the mother has to hold it for a long period of time (during a march, on a trip, etc.), she puts it in a scarf-shoulder strap (lombe), made from creepers that are scraped and woven as for a mat, or from a cloth of raffia fibers, or even from a pelt (nowadays it is often made from a piece of European cloth). The scarf must be sturdy, for were it to tear and the infant fall, far-reaching consequences would result; all of that woman's subsequent children would be condemned to die in the mother's womb or during the period of nursing.

As the child grows it is sometimes carried astride the mother's back, either because she does not like to be separated from it, or because the tyranny of the little one forces her to keep it with her even during her work, errands, and even dances. She remedies this awkward situation if possible by resorting to the assistance of an older girl, a young niece or cousin, or a little boy from among the immediate kin.

When the child rests during the day, it is laid on an ordinary bed or on a movable bed (bofinga), without any special arrangements. It has no difficulty sleeping soundly on such hard couches.

7) Weaning. Although a child is gradually accustomed
862 to solid food, it does not stop nursing. As it grows older, the nursing times are spaced farther and farther apart. But the child

[142] does not really stop nursing till it is about two years old, and sometimes two and a half if it has a weak constitution.

Weaning is not accompanied by any ceremony or feast. In order to break the child's habit, the mother smears her nipples [124] with the sap of the lifɛ́ɛ́f fruit (a kind of small sweet pimento or eggplant) or with a pimento-pepper extract (imbéngɛ). Sometimes she leaves the child with some relative (daughter, sister, etc.) for a time [498] while she lives elsewhere.

As we have seen above, after weaning, the ekelé-bokeka period comes to an end for the mother, and her infidelities no longer have repercussions on the life of her child.

[153] 8) If the mother dies while the infant is still being nursed, [129] the task of nursing is turned over to some woman who is disposed to undertake it even a Bɛ́ɛ́wa, and there always is one. After the child is weaned the woman is suitably recompensed. The use of [238] goat's milk is unknown.

154 9) Young children frequently suffer convulsions. This illness 757 is thought to be caused by hawks, and for that reason it is called [151] mpulú (bird). The Nkundó try to prevent it by hanging an amulet around children's necks; it is usually the clavicular triangle of a hen's carcass. In addition they know a remedy whose purpose is to strengthen the nerves: the child is laid on a mat stretched out anywhere on the roof of the hut. An eyewash (bɔ́lɔ́f) is prepared from the sap of leaves from the lɔ́ɔ́yanɔ́mbɔ bush and extract of mbɔ́lɔ́f (fruit of the bɔ́ɔ́ɔ́mbɔ́). Using a leaf shaped into a horn, a few drops are put into the child's eyes. Then the father or some other relative pulls out the mat from under the child and lifts it several times, shouting: ɛ́ɛ́ ɛ́ɛ́ ɛ́ɛ́.

154 10) No special importance is attached to teething. But a child whose upper teeth come in before the lower ones (a defect called ingɔ́ndɔ) is considered abnormal. Therefore he is forbidden to eat the first fruits of hunting or fishing in an enclosure (mpɛɛ), lest the latter lose their productivity.